

VZCZCXRO6677
OO RUEHCHI RUEHCN RUEHDT RUEHHM
DE RUEHML #2056/01 2720829
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 290829Z SEP 09
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5302
RUEHJS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHOVQHS/COMSEVENTHFLT IMMEDIATE
INFO RHHMUNA/USPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE 2287
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 0311
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE
RUEHRO/USMISSION UN ROME IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MANILA 002056

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

BANGKOK FOR USAID /OFDA REGIONAL ADVISOR A. DWYER
USAID FOR DCHA/OFDA R. THAYER
USAID W/ FOR ANE/AA AND DCHA/FPP
GENEVA FOR N. KYLOH
USUN FOR OFDA REP
BRUSSELS FOR P. BROWN
ROME FOR USAID/OHA H. SPANOS
SECDEF FOR SOLIC
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR J3/J4/J5
PACOM FOR J3/J4/J5
NSC FOR P. MARCHAM

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [EAD](#) [SOCI](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [SENV](#) [EAGR](#) [RP](#)
SUBJECT: DEATH TOLL RISES AS MANILA DRIES OUT FROM TROPICAL
STORM ONDOY

REFTELS: A) Manila 2049 B) Manila 2046

11. (U) The death toll from tropical storm Ondoy (international name Ketsana) climbed to 240 as of Tuesday September 29 as Metro Manila and 27 surrounding provinces dig out from the mud and debris deposited by the storm's record breaking rains and flooding. The Philippines' National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) reports 1.8 million people affected, with more than 12,000 rescued, nearly 375,000 persons in evacuation centers, and an additional 235,000 displaced persons not in government shelters. Philippines Secretary of National Defense Gilbert Teodoro estimated that 1.4 billion pesos (approx. USD 30 million) worth of damage has been incurred. As rescue operations wind down and relief efforts gear up, overwhelmed officials are concentrating on providing potable water, food, shelter and preventing disease for those affected.

U.S. Assistance

12. (SBU) As floodwaters receded and rescue operations ceased, personnel and equipment of the U.S. Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines (JSOTF-P) returned to the southern Philippines. The Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) will receive funding of USD 100,000 from USAID'S Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) by COB September 29. The PNRC's initial purchases are expected to consist of non-food relief supplies such as blankets, hygiene kits and water purification kits. (reftel A).

Embassy Chancery Back in Business

13. (SBU) Although still running on generator power and without potable water, the Embassy Chancery building reopened for

business on September 29. Post has limited or no classified communications. The flood-damaged water treatment plant has been repaired, and potable water will be restored as soon as medical tests confirm safety (24-48 hours). The Chancery will be reconnected to the commercial grid at COB today. Some 40 locally employed staff were heavily impacted by the flooding and the residences of 10 American direct-hire families suffered flood damage. Administrative leave has been authorized for those severely affected.

14. (SBU) The Consular Section has received inquiries on behalf of 56 American citizens believed to be stranded in various flood-stricken areas. Staff has located and confirmed the well-being of 36 of these individuals, while 20 Americans remain unaccounted for. The majority of the latter are believed to be in the hard hit Cainta, Rizal area, much of which is still under water. Staff has provided information on the missing Americans to the relevant local authorities and continues to follow up with them. The Consular Section is open for full services and has made arrangements to accommodate all visa applicants who were scheduled for appointments on September 28.

Next Steps

15. (SBU) The Country Team, working closely with OFDA, continues to coordinate with the Government of the Philippines to facilitate disaster response operations. On September 29, Post received a formal request for U.S. assistance from the Philippine Government. A copy of the request, signed by

MANILA 00002056 002 OF 002

Gilberto Teodoro -- Secretary of National Defense and Chairman of the National Disaster Coordinating Council -- has been sent by e-mail to EAP/MTS. Post is working with Washington to request authorization for U.S. Department of Defense and U.S. Military Forces to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. The specific needs from the U.S. Department of Defense are transportation, road clearance/debris removal, medical support, food, non-food items, and supplies to facilitate the Philippine Government's response to the flooding. Post proposes that the majority of DOD support be provided by forces already planning to be in the Philippines for the Talon Vision/PHIBLEX (Philippines Bilateral Exercise) exercise.

16. (SBU) Post is also in the process of requesting authorization for the use of up to \$4 million from the Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster, and Civic Aid (OHDACA) account. The funds would be used to procure local building materials, medical supplies, and necessary incidentals to support the Tropical Storm Ketsana/Ondoy relief and rehabilitation effort.

Comment

17. (SBU) As the scope of the current disaster continues to unfold, we remain in close contact with our Philippine counterparts to help however we can. The Philippine government and an energetic civil society have mobilized to help citizens cope with this disaster, but not always effectively. Looming to the east is another tropical storm, and a tropical depression that could arrive in Philippine territory within the next few days.

Kenney